

PRESSING ON SERMON

Sermon series – road trip. The travels of Paul and the beginning of the church

Paul had been to Philippi before. He loved the people and they in turn loved him. This time instead of visiting, he was forced to write a letter as he was in prison in ROME for preaching the gospel. It had been a year since he had been there. Probably received word of things that were happening. He wanted to remind them to keep their eye on the Goal.

He starts out letting them know how he is doing. Even in his jail cell he is “pressing on” to try to grasp the reason Jesus chose him. Jesus had a vision for Paul when he was on the road to Damascus. Paul wants to be sure he is following that dream. That he is keeping his eye on the goal. He is urging the Philippians to do the same.

Everyone is grabbed by Christ for a purpose, and we must all press on towards that goal.

He also tells them to forget about the past.

Forget about past achievements and past sorrows. He is not saying that you wipe them from your memory. But you don't use them as reasons for not pressing on to the goal. No time to rest on your laurels or blame your past for why you cannot follow Christ.

Keep focusing on the goal.

– Let down your walls

As we keep our eyes on JC we must be open to new ways of thinking, and new possibilities.

Samaritan story – both the rabbi and the priest passed on by, refusing to see that they could be part of the solution. It was the Samaritan who stopped and made a difference, in both of their lives and in the future.

Pressing on means not giving up. Not taking an easier way. There were those in Philippi who believed you can do whatever you wanted and as long as you say you are sorry, God will forgive you and you will be in heaven. You will still reach the goal. There were those who said you must experience everything life has to offer, both good and bad. Once you have done this, you are complete.

Paul reminds the Philippians to imitate him, and we are reminded to imitate Christ. Follow the one who has grasped you, formed you and has great plans for you. Pay attention.

We live in an age when there are lots of options for people besides being participants in church life. Some of our churches are dealing with dwindling memberships or lack of children in Sunday school or the inability to field a youth group or fund a mission project. It's easy to count the

reasons why those conditions exist, and it's even easy to say "well, that's the way it is. We'll just have to adjust and make the best of it."

That is not what Paul would say. Pressing on means trying things, new programs, new strategies, new schedules, new packaging for our gospel, for Jesus Christ, the one who never stopped until he grasped us and we in turn said yes to him.

We are never to stop pressing on until we take our final road trip over the river Jordan and meet Jesus face to face. Until then there is work to be done. God has a job for you, are you going to answer? Only you can decide.